exempted the Prince of Arcot from the payment of Motor Vehicles Tax to his car, which is for his personal use. The State Government have also exempted him from the provision of the Arms Act to possess certain Fire Arms.

Violence in North-East

1561. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDIY: Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no let up in North-East violence;

(b) the number of persons killed by insurgents between April and May, 1998 in Assam; and

(c) the measures taken to solve the insurgency problem?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (c) Certain States in the North East Region have varying degree of militancy and terrorism. It cannot be said that there is an increase in such activities. In Nagaland, there has been a significant decline in violence after the ceasefire in August, 1997. However, 84 persons have been killed by insurgents in April and May 1998 in Assam.

Government has repeatedly expressed readiness to hold talks in order to resolve the issues. Recently on April 15, 1998 the Prime Minister, in his Press Statement at Guwahati, had stated "To all those who have strayed from the paths of togetherness, whether in Assam or other states of the North East, I extend an invitation; come forward; let us discuss; my Government is committed to holding talks, to a restoration of peace; let us do so within the four corners of our Constitution". In addition, steps taken to control the insurgent activities include *inter alia,* deployment of additional units of Central Para Military Forces and the Army, improved coordination and sharing of intelligence, sanction of India Reserve Battalions, modernisation of upgradation of State Police Forces, sanction of Special Central Assistance, declaration of the most seriously affected areas as disturbed areas and notification of the major insurgent groups as unlawful associations. The situation is also kept under watch and is reviewed from time to time for taking appropriate decisions.

Afghan Guerillas in J & K

1562. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMCHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state the action taken to counter Afghan guerillas active in Jammu and Kashmir?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): With local militancy on the wane, Pak sponsored militant outfits have been making efforts to induct more foreign mercenaries including some belonging to Afghanistan to carry out militant activities in J & K. The action taken by the Government to tackle militancy in J & K include sustained anti-terrorists operations by the Police and the security forces, including intensive patrolling on the border, LOC and hinterland, establishing pickets in vulnerable areas, strengthening of State Police/intelligence network and coordination of the security arrangements amongst various agencies. As per State Government, from January 1990 to May 1998, 149 Afghan mercenaries have been killed and 22 arrested in J & K.

Scandal Involving Crores of Rupees in Traffic Signals

1563. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a scandal involving crores of rupees in the city's traffic signals was recently detected by an Expert Committee set up by the police authorities;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government against those involved in the scandal?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (c) A three member Committee of police officers found on random check that the maintenance contractor of traffic signals/ blinkers had committed some irregularities; these included non-laying of cables and discrepancies in the length of the cables. Thereupon another Committee was constituted to check and physically verify each pending and future claim of the contractor, so that no over-payment is allowed. Delhi Police have informed that necessary deductions have been made before making payment to the contractor. Moreover, a show cause notice has also been issued to the contractor about the said irregularities.

Special Status to Orissa

1564. SHRI NARENDRA PRADHAN: Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether any demand has been received to declare Orissa as a special category State; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken on it?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The issue of declaring Orissa as a Special Category State is to be examined in the context of the Gadgil formula which is the basis for inter-state allocation of Central Plan Assistance. The Planning Commission, at present, is examining the suggestions/comments received from Chief Ministers regarding further revision of the said formula which was last revised in 1991 with the approval of the National Development Council.

Implementation of Assam Accord

1565. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps initiated by Government for clause-wise implementation of the Assam Accord and the progress made, so far;

(b) the major constraints identified in the implementation of the Accord;

(c) whether Government propose to scrap the IMDT Act or to amend it in terms of the Assam Accord, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the achievements made, so far, in sealing of the Indo-Bangla Border?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Action has been taken to implement all the provisions of the Assam Accord. Central Government has also been holding tripartite meeting with Government of Assam and representatives of All Assam Students Union (AASU) to review implementation of various clauses of Assam Accord. Action taken so far to implement the Accord is given in the statement (*See* below).

(b) Certain provisions of the Accord are of continuing nature e.g. speedy all round economic development of Assam, measures to prevent infiltration, crossing/ attempting to cross the border etc. and therefore need to be continously monitored.

(c) The scrapping of IMDT Act, 1983 is under consideration of Government.

(d) 779.58 km border fencing of sanctioned 896 kms. has been completed on Indo-Bangladesh Border upto March 31, 1998.

Statement

The Government of India is fully committed to the implementation of the Assam Accord, 1985, Various measures